



TASK FORCE LIBERTY ***Press Release***

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FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, TIKRIT, Iraq. Soldiers in Task Force Liberty continue to make a difference in Iraq. Across the spectrum of operations, Task Force Liberty partners with Iraqi Security Forces in Kirkuk, As Sulayminayah, Diyala and Salah Ad Din Provinces to build capable and sustainable Iraqi police and army forces.

The seeds of Iraqi Security Forces from 2004 continue to grow into competent and capable army and police forces throughout North Central Iraq. As more Iraqi forces conduct joint operations alongside the Soldiers of Task Force Liberty, the greater the cooperation of the Iraqi people in assisting them in their efforts.

The mission of Task Force Liberty continues to build upon those forces, creating independent and self sustaining Iraqi army and police forces.

Breaking the Cycle of Violence

In the last two weeks, operations in the Task Force Liberty area resulted in an estimated 575 Anti-Iraqi forces detained, three killed and six wounded. Significant ammunition seized includes more than 2,165 rocket, mortar and artillery rounds, 5,900 rounds of ammunition and more than 65 pounds of explosives. Major equipment captured included three sniper rifles, 173 mines, 252 small arms and grenades, 29 rocket propelled grenade (RPG) launchers with 76 rounds, 511 assorted fuses, more than 23 Million Iraqi dinar and 16,000 of U.S. dollars.

Within the Division's area of responsibility, 73 improvised explosive devices were discovered prior to detonation, preventing the needless loss of life at the hands of Anti-Iraqi forces.



Joint efforts, intelligence capture suspected terrorist

Soldiers in the Iraqi army's 210th Battalion, operating with Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team's 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry conducted a raid near Ad Dujayl on April 10. A suspected terror cell leader was detained during the raid.

The suspect, an Egyptian man, was identified by various civilian tips and intelligence gathered from previous detainees. Incriminating evidence was gathered at his home associating him with recent mortar attacks and planting improvised explosive devices.

The ability of Iraqi Security Forces to gather their own intelligence and verify their information from local tips depicts the growing capabilities of the soldiers in of the Iraqi army. Their performance builds confidence from the Iraqi populace.

1st Brigade Combat Team (Raider). Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division from Fort Stewart, Georgia, continue to expand their partnership with Iraqi Security Forces, bringing security to the people of North Central Iraq. Helping to equip Iraqi Security Forces, Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 103rd Armor issued the Ash Sharqat Traffic Police Glock pistols, ballistic vests, a metal detector hand wand, handcuffs, flex cuffs, and whistles. The traffic police directly support the city police force.

Efforts to improve coordination between Iraqi forces with security of power infrastructure led to success in Bayji on April 19. Meetings with the Company C, 201st Iraqi army commander, the Bayji Chief of Police, his substation police commanders and leaders from the brigade's 1st Battalion, 103rd Armor are achieving synergy. The coordination between agencies now includes all the substation commanders and resulted in numerous joint patrols with Iraqi army and police forces.

Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor conducted a battalion staff command post training exercise for the Iraqi army's 2nd Battalion, 30th Brigade. Staff functions in the Iraqi unit focused on personnel management, gathering and analyzing citizen tips and requisitioning of supplies.



3rd Brigade Combat Team (Sledgehammer). The battalion task forces in the “Sledgehammer” Brigade Combat Team from Fort Benning, Georgia continue their work to bring peace and stability to Diyala Province.

On April 7, Baqubah residents, flanked by Governor Ra’ad Hameed Harris, members of the Provincial Governing Council and 3rd BCT representatives, formally opened the doors on the new Diyala Woman’s Center. The Woman’s center will serve as the focal point for woman’s outreach programs across the province. The center features job training and education. Governor Harris stated, “We are including woman in the rebuilding of Iraq, and we hope that women will lose their fear. We ask the woman of Diyala to be strong according to our values and ideas.”

“We ask the woman of Diyala, who respect all the principles of this society, to take part in all the concepts of life. We want woman to be present in the next period in this society,” Harris said.

As progress continues towards stability, citizens in Diyala have begun to stand up against the violence brought into their lives by the insurgency. On April 17th, with Iraqi army and police units providing security, the citizens of Khan Bani Sa’ad organized a demonstration to protest recent acts of violence. Men, women and children marched from the site of a recent car bomb attack to the town’s center shouting that they will not tolerate violence in their community and praise for their own security forces.

Demonstrating increased proficiency, the 32nd Iraqi army brigade conducted a cordon and search on April 19. The brigade detained 20 suspected insurgents, two of whom were foreign fighters in possession of 100 feet of electrical wire. The brigade conducted the operation within three hours of notification, displaying effectiveness in planning and conducting independent combat operations.

116th Brigade Combat Team (Warrior). The 116th Brigade Combat Team’s mission in North-Central Iraq continues to be focused in the areas of security, economic development, governance and communication as it enters the second quarter of 2005.

The last two weeks have seen ongoing progress in the training and operations of Iraqi security forces in the provinces of Kirkuk and As Sulaymaniyah. The 116th BCT’s Task Force 1-148 Field Artillery continues training and certifying soldiers of the 215th



Iraqi army battalion on squad-level tasks and basic soldier skills. The task force also trained Sulaymaniyah police officers to improve their weapons marksmanship skills.

Task Force 1-163 Infantry continues working daily with Iraqi Security Forces and local officials to improve security in their area for the western portion of Kirkuk Province. Recent operations have detained insurgents suspected of attacks on coalition forces.

Soldiers from Task Force 2-116 Armor oversaw training of the 208th Iraqi army battalion staff, as well as conducting squad-level training for the Iraqi soldiers. The task force accomplished numerous joint raids with Iraqi Security Forces, capturing numerous suspected terrorists. The unit observed several instances of local Iraqi citizens leading them to explosive ordnance.

TF 3-116 Armor reports training Iraqi army soldiers on individual fighting position construction and patrol tactics. All units are seeing the investment in training, facilities and equipment pay off as Iraqi forces are spearheading many of their operations.

Economic development continues to be seen in the heightened pace of construction and improvement projects. An agreement was signed on April 7th between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Kirkuk's Governor Abdul Rahman Mustafa, and the 116th BCT's economic team for the creation of a regional landfill to serve Kirkuk province. Trash removal had been a high priority for both Governor Mustafa and 116th BCT Commander Brig. Gen. Alan Gayhart.

Other economic milestones over the past two weeks include the completion of ten school renovation projects, continuing progress on construction of a medical clinic and the completion of new fire and police stations.

Communicating important information to the local populace and key leaders was ongoing over the past two weeks. The 116th BCT's leadership facilitated a meeting between Kirkuk Provincial Council members and several visiting U.S. Representatives. The meeting was covered by local press. The council also participated in a press conference facilitated by the 116th BCT. The local Iraqi Media Network's talk shows have featured topics such as security and governance.



278th Regimental Combat Team (The Volunteers). The 278th Regimental Combat Team from the Tennessee Army National Guard has maintained its operational tempo and continues its focus on helping Iraqis improve their nation.

On April 4, World Orphan Day activities were held at the Youth Center in Khanaquin. World Orphan Day is an observance that highlights orphans and the need for society to provide for them. Soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 278th RCT, local Iraqi leaders and the citizens of Khanaquin took part in festivities. This celebration demonstrates the Iraqi's commitment to the real future of Iraq; its children.

The Diyala Province's sheiks are acting to show their support for Iraq's fledgling democracy. Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 278th RCT and the Balad Ruz Mayor hosted the largest sheik's conference ever in the Balad Ruz district on April 5. Over 150 sheiks and 50 local government officials were on hand to discuss security and reconstruction issues. All the participants agreed that the meeting was worthwhile and to meet in the future. This event provided local leaders and citizens a way to participate in the new government and to strengthen ties between local populace and elected officials in the district.

Economic development is a crucial ingredient in stabilizing Iraq. On Sunday, April 10, the mayor of As Sadiyah invited Soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 278th RCT to a feast of fresh fish caught from the Hamrin Lake on the Diyala river. During the fish feast the mayor, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Holmes, Capt. Wayne Culbreath, and Capt. Matthew Smith discussed economic development issues important to the city of As Sadiyah. Topics included exploiting the abundant fish supply in the Hamrin Lake to better provide necessary protein to the civilian population and a plan to bring a dairy farm to Sadiyah in order to manufacture powdered milk for sale in the region. The projects, being led by Capt. Culbreath, aim to decrease the unemployment rate in the region while providing necessary products and services to the civilians.

42nd Aviation Brigade (Eagle). Task Force Eagle soared to new heights during this period by awarding the Army's Air Medal with device for Valor to four aviators of the 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry. The medals were awarded to Lt. Col. Frank Muth, Capt. Ashley Thames and Chief Warrant Officers Edwin Annis and Scott Stradley.



During the early evening of March 20, a flight of two OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopters observed a large explosion while conducting reconnaissance and security operations in the vicinity of Hib Hib. The aircraft, piloted by Lt. Col. Muth and Chief Warrant Officer Stradley contacted the commander of 3rd Brigade Combat Team and moved to develop the situation.

As the flight approached, an unidentified rocket propelled grenade engaged them. The aircraft conducted evasive maneuvers while attempting to gain contact with the enemy. After conducting reconnaissance of the point of origin with no results, the flight continued its mission to the origin of the previous explosion.

The aircraft arrived at the site and identified the source of the explosion as a Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) that had detonated adjacent to an Iraqi army compound. The aircraft became engaged by small arms fire from seven individuals located on one corner of the compound. The pilots of both aircraft, including the second one piloted by Capt. Thames and Chief Warrant Officer Annis, without regard for their own personal safety, prioritized the greatest threats, established an engagement area and targeted the insurgents with machine gun and rocket fire. Their rapid assessment of the situation and timely response protected the lives of Iraqi forces within the compound and killed seven of the enemy.

Once the enemy broke contact, the air cavalry team swept the area and began directing ground forces towards the insurgents. Both aircraft quickly came under heavy small arms and rocket propelled grenade fire. Throughout the engagement, both aircraft continued to direct ground forces onto enemy locations. Over the course of the battle, the aircraft were engaged multiple times without receiving any direct hits.

The 1-17th Cav aircrews distinguished themselves by closing with and engaging terrorist forces attacking an Iraqi army compound. Their efforts ensured security for the ground commander. Their determination allowed the disruption of a large scale, complex attack.

Division Artillery (Thunder). 42nd Division Artillery (Divarty) Soldiers continue with their mission of force protection. Radar crews across North Central Iraq continue to assist combat patrols with points of origin for insurgent indirect fire attacks while



counterfire artillery batteries continue their efforts to destroy the terrorists before the next round can be fired.

On April 14, Divarty Soldiers conducted a different type of force protection mission. Divarty Soldiers went on a mission in the Zaab River Valley with Soldiers from the 519th Military Intelligence Battalion. The mission was to engage the local police stations in order to assess information. Divarty Soldiers provided additional security assistance to the team.

Division Engineers (Detonator). The 42nd Division Engineer Brigade said good-bye to Soldiers from the 983rd Engineer Battalion (-) and the 4/365th Engineer Detachment on April 15 as they moved on to support other units in Iraq. The 983rd was hard at work completing several quality of life projects already underway at FOB Speicher. The Engineer Brigade retains Company C, 983 Engineer Battalion for the brigade's role in the overall future base closure plan within the Task Force Liberty area of operations.

Task Force Trailblazer (467th Engineer Battalion) continues to reduce the effectiveness of IEDs within the area, working closely with the brigade combat teams.

The carpenters, electricians, and plumbers of the 793rd Engineer Detachment (Utility) continue quality of life upgrades on FOB Danger and Patrol Bases Olsen and Uvanni.

Engineer Brigade Soldiers working as the Regional Reconstruction Operations Center (RROC) continue working with the Ministries of Power and Oil to ensure the success of reconstruction and rehabilitation of critical infrastructure facilities in Kirkuk and As Sulaymaniyah, as well as a number of schools and health clinics throughout North Central Iraq.

Division Support Command (Muleskinner). Division Support Command (DISCOM) continues to focus on supporting Task Force Liberty brigade combat teams with all classes of supply. The 50th Main Support Battalion conducted Combat Logistical Patrols (CLPs) throughout the Area of Operation, traveling miles of support routes.

These CLPs concentrate on delivering and receiving supplies and weapons for the Iraqi army and security forces as far south as Taji. The ability to supply the Iraqis in a timely manner with adequate modern equipment is paramount to their success in taking



over the counterinsurgency fight. Equipment delivered included tactical vehicles, water trucks and fuel trucks. The DISCOM also received 38 GAZ trucks, the equivalent of 5 ton cargo trucks for distribution. DISCOM is repairing warehouses to store Iraqi military equipment. It also developed a fairly large repair part stockage for vehicles, waiting to be issued to Iraqi forces.

The 50th MSB aided in security improvements on FOB Danger. Combat Logistics Patrols carrying large blast walls for placement on the FOB increased during the past two weeks. These CLPs also included night movements, a new technique for the 50th MSB. These missions add to the normal sustainment CLPs conducted in conjunction with the Corps.

In addition to ground transportation of supplies, the support operations officer and movement control officer have been using helicopters. The CH-47 helicopters are able to move ammunition and are instrumental in hauling large items north from Balad. Every logistics flight reduces the number of Soldiers on the roads of Iraq.

DISCOM also assisted with the movement and off-loading of new M-1114 Armored Humvees. These will be distributed to the combat units throughout the division. These improved models are replacing the current force of Add-on-Armor Humvees or ballistic armored vehicles.

Conclusion

Task Force Liberty and our Iraqi Security Force partners continue to help provide a safe and secure Iraq. We continue to work with the Iraqi Security Forces to neutralize the insurgency. We continue to train, coach and support the Iraqi Security Forces as they develop their own independent capabilities to defeat the insurgency and improve the quality of life for the Iraqi people. We believe in the future of Iraq. To our families, friends, employers and the American people, Task Force Liberty thanks you for your steadfast support and encouragement.

Never Forget!

For more information on the 42nd Infantry Division and Task Force Liberty:

www.42id.army.mil
